

5526
A
PLAIN ATTEMPT

TO HOLD UP TO VIEW

THE ANCIENT GOSPEL,

BEING A DISCOURSE ON ACTS ix, 22.

SHewing FROM THE APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY, THAT THE
CLERGY AND THEIR FOLLOWERS, IN OUR AGE AND
COUNTRY,

ARE THE VERY ANTICHRIST.

OPPOSING THAT GOSPEL WITH THE WEAPONS OF JEWISH
ERROR STILL, BUT THAT THEY WILL BE
CONFOUNDED BY IT.

ADAPTED TO THE MEANEST CAPACITIES.

By DANIEL HUMPHREYS.

Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly they are ravening wolves—

—Enoch also the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these.—

—How much she has glorified herself and lived deliciously, so
much torment and sorrow give her.

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AN ATTEMPT, &c.

ACTS, ix. 22.

*BUT SAUL INCREASED THE MORE IN STRENGTH, AND
CONFOUNDED THE JEWS WHICH DWELT AT
DAMASCUS, PROVING THAT THIS IS
VERY CHRIST.*

IN discoursing from these words, I will endeavor with great plainness, by God's permission, and as he shall enable me, to shew ;

1. What the apostolic doctrine or testimony is ; or how Paul and the other apostles preached the gospel.

2. That those who preach the gospel now, hold up that very testimony ; without addition, subtraction, or substitution.

3. That this testimony stands in direct opposition to the doctrine of the antichristian world now, as it did to the doctrine of the Jewish world, in the apostolic age. And will confound its modern, as it did its ancient opposers.

First, I am to shew what is the apostolic gospel, or testimony. And it is this, that Jesus is the Christ. See the text ; “ proving that is very Christ.”

See also Acts xvii. 3. "Opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, *is Christ.*" Chap. xviii. 4, 5, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come, Paul was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews, *that Jesus was Christ.*" And again v. 27, 28, "Helped them much who had believed thro' grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing from the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Here then is plentiful and undeniable proof of what the apostles testified; and it amounted to this, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, or anointed one, foretold thro' out the Old Testament.

It is of importance to note here, that Jesus is the name of the person, and Christ of the office he sustains. This is a truth very plain and familiar to all who have an ear to hear the scripture, but so little or so ill taught by modern scribes, who shut up the kingdom of Heaven, that many when they hear the words, instead of thinking of the person named as designated by his distinguishing office, *the anointed*, are ready to think only of a person with a *double name*. I appeal to the conscience of those who think,

and observe, whether this be not the case. And whether this inattention does not obscure the truth Paul preached ; as though he had said no more than this, that Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ.

But we may notice further, that although the scriptural character of the Messiah is in reality but one, yet it may be considered in a two fold view, having respect to the time when it was drawn. The Prophets described him before, and the Apostles after his coming in the flesh. There is then the prophetic and the apostolic description of the same person, perfectly harmonizing, but the latter containing the historical relation, and deduction of particulars, included more briefly under the generals of prophecy.

Correspondent to this, the doctrine of the apostles which is but one, may be considered in a twofold view,---First, they opened and expounded the prophets describing the Messiah to come. See the text before cited, “ reasoned---*out of the scriptures,*” as Jesus had before said, “ Thus it is *written,* and thus it *behooved* Christ to suffer,” so Paul preached ; *opening the scriptures,* “ that Christ *must suffer.*” And then secondly, the Apostles opened the character and works of Jesus as exactly answering to the prophetic description.

The apostolic exposition and illustration

of the prophecies, was an open attack upon the *then reigning* religion of their country. It struck at the vitals of the doctrine of the Jewish Church, as that doctrine then stood. The apostles opposed, yea confuted, the Jewish interpretation of the prophecies, yea the most established comment, sanctioned as the true meaning by their great and learned Doctors and Rabbies.

The interpretation of these commentators, taught that the prophetic Messiah was to appear, not to work righteousness for them, but to teach them how to work it for themselves. How to work the works of God ; *what good thing they should do* ; which was the *principal command* to be obeyed. Or in more modern style, what was the *main thing in religion*. And they stumbled at the Messiah described by the Prophets, as the worker of righteousness for sinners : This appears from Rom. ix. 32, 33, referring to Isaiah. They also stumbled at the view given of him, as offering a sacrifice for sin. That the Messiah should die for sin, and men have eternal life by his sacrifice alone, was what they could neither credit nor relish : Instead of this they held that the Christ was to be an immortal man, a great earthly Prince, putting himself at the head of their national church, which under him was to be freed from subjection to a foreign

power, exalted, aggrandized and enlarged by a great accession of proselytes from the nations. Much earthly prosperity and abundance of worldly religion (like what we have seen,) formed their idea of the reign of *the Christ* they zealously held, and the only one they wished ; so long as they cherished these darling errors, so long they would not only reject, but hate and oppose Jesus of Nazareth. The apostles boldly combated these errors, and they did it by opening the true meaning of the Old Testament which confuted them all ; the New Testament begins, continues and ends with this doctrine, that the kingdom of the Messiah is the kingdom of heaven, a kingdom not of this world : In this is summed up the teaching of Jesus and of his apostles ; and this takes off the veil from the prophecies. It shews their consistency when they describe the Christ as very low and humbled, and very exalted and glorious, and his kingdom as very weak and very grand. The Jewish comment overthrows one part of these to establish the other ; It never could reconcile them. The doctrine of the apostles gave the fullest meaning *to both* ; it shewed from the prophets that the Christ was to make a greater change of the church of God, than even Moses did, to change its state from earthly to heavenly, to set up a kingdom small here, great hereafter ; that the Son of God, Israel's

King was to be a poor despised man—to suffer for sins, to die for sins---That *according to the scriptures this must needs be* ; and also that he must be buried and rise, see 1 Cor. 15, 3, 4. That Moses and all the prophets said that these things *should come*. See Acts xxvi. 22, 23, That he, the Shiloh to come, should have a collection of people, all forgiven, all righteous ; having these blessings not working, but believing his work. That the inheritance of this kingdom was heavenly, not earthly ; its blessings spiritual and no other. That of the subjects of this kingdom while in this mortal state, sufferings and persecutions were the *lot*, self-denial their *business*, and the cross their *burden*, patiently borne. Such the apostles shewed the prophetic Messiah and his kingdom to be---And their interpretation and opening of the scriptures, stood opposed in every part, to the Jewish false glosses, and overthrew them all.

The second thing the apostles did was to shew that Jesus of Nazareth, and his kingdom answered exactly to the prophetic description. That the character drawn was found in him alone, and the kingdom described was set up by him.

It was never disputed by the Jews that Jesus died ; rather they vehemently objected his death on the cross ; drawing from it

an argument that appeared strong to a worldly mind, that he was not the Christ. The apostles referred to *the Crucifixion* as a fact admitted on all hands, and gloried in it. They never sought to cover the offence or shame of the cross. But drew from it an argument powerful to convince, (where spiritual discernment was given,) that Jesus was the Christ. The Messiah was to be the Son of God ; Such, Jesus, by many infallible proofs appeared to be---The Holy One was to suffer for sins. Jesus was perfectly holy, and yet suffered ; therefore *it must needs* be that he suffered *for the sins of men*. But the apostles went further---They testified that he rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. That they certainly knew this ; that they saw him alive ; after his passion ; and finally saw him gradually rise from the earth, in their presence and full view, and go into heaven. Paul saw him after he was there. The Jews denied all this, the apostles appealed to God for the truth of it, and rested the controversy upon the answer he should make to the appeal. This was given, and it was testified that Jesus was glorified ; The course of nature reversed in the name of *Jesus alive and exalted* as Christ, shewed that *life and exaltation*. Signs and wonders declared it to the conviction of thousands, and confusion of thousands more.

Thus God bare witness to the apostles--- They could also point to the kingdom of this Jesus, now set as King on the Heavenly holy hill of Zion. They could stretch out the hand towards the Church in Jerusalem, and say ; *Behold that Kingdom !* Here it was visible, and accessible ; such signs and wonders, love, joy, peace, heavenly mindedness, boldness, and yet patience were never seen on earth before ! Thus it appeared in a multitude of events, not otherwise to be accounted for, that Christ had appeared, suffered, and was glorified, and had changed the state of the Church from earthly to heavenly. *Now* his kingdom was not *from hence*, as it had once been.

The apostolic doctrine concerning Jesus is concentrated at the cross ; It rests on the cross ; There its lines are united. In this object of Jewish disgust the apostles gloried ; and there the first Christians found their chief Joy ; To the one side it was precious ; to the other a rock of offence ; From the cross the ministers of the word held forth righteousness, as well as forgiveness, and without the cross, these could not be ; nor the scripture that foretold them, be fulfilled. " To Him," said the Galilean preachers, " give all the prophets witness, that thro' his name, whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins." " By him all

who believe are justified," "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness;" In the gospel, "the righteousness of God is revealed." This character and kingdom, and these blessings, which they described as belonging to Jesus, were the very character, kingdom and blessings, which all the prophets had laid out beforehand for the Messiah; *Jesus then must be that Messiah.*---We now come to the second thing proposed to be shewn.

II. All who preach the gospel now, hold up the very testimony of the apostles.

According to many the gospel, as *at the first* preached, is not suited to *our times*. At that period the majority were obstinate infidels; now the majority are considered as baptized, and as already believing the doctrine, in proof of which the apostles were so earnestly employed: It is indeed too true to be denied that among these multitudes we see none of those fruits, those mighty effects then produced by the simple belief of the gospel. And men now believe, in the modern sense of the word, without either joy or hope; and their lives are never the better for *their faith*; The truth of the gospel is held to be destitute of all power to give hope, or produce obedience; Preaching therefore takes a new turn; It holds forth some principle as necessary to be acquired

or implanted, which may supply this supposed great defect of power in the old gospel. The looser sort of the Clergy teach that this principle may be acquired by the exercise of free will ; and that being acquired, it will produce as much goodness as is now demanded of frail human creatures ; and this is to be *their righteousness*. The stricter sort teach that a principle of a higher order is requisite, which is God's gift ; but that it may be expected, if sought in a certain prescribed way ; Here they give manifold directions as to the mode of seeking—and copious descriptions of its effects, constituting the virtue and holiness of a modern converted man---and what this wants of the perfection required by the law of God, Christ is supposed in some way or other to make up---And this, with his purchasing the grace that gives the principle, is the chief use they have for a Christ---Thus they agree in setting aside the revealed atonement and righteousness, and teaching men, that they must form a character, in order to be justified ; and so seek justification, as it were by the works of the Law---But a preacher of the true gospel, will hold up nothing but Christ crucified, the power of God to salvation. With this doctrine of the Cross alone, would he labour to dispossess men, vexed with the Legion of modern

Doctrines---With this alone he would answer all questions and systems on the point of a Sinner's acceptance with God---All disquisitions on the power of man's will to do good, and obtain happiness, he could answer in two words; "therefore it is of *faith* that it might be by *grace*"---It is not of him who willeth, but of God who sheweth mercy---And all directions for striving, acting faith, getting a new heart, by two more; "*not of works*, but of him that *calletb.*" Christ (the End of the Law for righteousness,) hath redeemed us, that the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles---We have therefore, he would say, nothing to do to strive for righteousness, or to attempt to *redeem ourselves*. But being *bought with a price* are to glorify God---This gospel is included in this short sentence, "*Jesus is the Christ*,"---This continues to be a stumbling block to the religious, and foolishness to the Philosophers, in our day, as it was in Paul's time. And woe to the man, who in order to please either of these classes, (by lessening the offence of the Cross,) shall presume to change it !!!

III. The gospel or Apostolic Testimony stands in like opposition to the doctrine of the antichristian world now, as it did in the primitive times to that of the Jewish world. And will confound the antichristian, as it

formerly did the Jewish opposers. In these last times, described as times of Apostacy, men have adopted the Jewish false glosses on the Prophets, holding with the Jews, that a worldly Christ was foretold. What the Prophets have spoken of spiritual glory and prosperity, they interpret of worldly glory and prosperity. Finding the Kingdom of the Messiah often described in prophetic language borrowed from the typical earthly Kingdom of Israel, and its prosperous state, they do as the Jews did before them, they take all this literally ; because thus understood it pleases their earthly mind.--- And yet the same men refuse to take the New Testament literally ; because so taken it does not please their earthly mind.

The things foretold of the extent and glory of the Kingdom of the Messiah, in the resurrection state, the times of restitution, they chuse to understand as spoken of worldly extent and glory, in this mortal state, in the times of the Gentiles. They hold that the prophets foretold a Christ who should have whole nations of this world for his followers---They accordingly talk of *Christ's world*, or the Christian world ; meaning that great collective body, • in which men under his name are now tearing each other in pieces. A world consisting of millions and millions ; concerning

which they believe that the Messiah of the Prophets was to come and put himself at the head of it, and do for it much the same; that the Jews expected for the Jewish world; yea, they have outstripped the warm fancies of the Rabbins. They have out-judaized the Jews. Witness the Bishop of Rome in his former splendor, claiming to be a God, ruling the empire by spiritual terrors, and by the power of the ten Kings; witness his cardinals and bishops in princely state---the bishops of the empire invested with kingly power---the English archbishops and bishops, high lords and renowned, with a pompous subaltern train, under the King, the head and Pope of their Church. We have seen a pretended great High Priest, and a Kingdom of Priests and Clergy, with a world at their heels, fulfilling all worldly lusts, and ministering to the lusts of the Clergy their leaders---A system of grandeur, pomp, power, wealth and voluptuousness, surpassing Jewish dreams and fables. A monstrous hierarchy raised and flourishing under the curse of God; and ere long (its permitted period being nearly run out) to sink under his vengeance. And all this built upon a perversion of the prophetic word, by men *given up to strong delusion to believe a lie*. And even where we see less of this grandeur we may see the same spirit,

the same hungry and thirsting after earthly things. The form of the Clergy's empire as set up in our country, may be considered as the Republican form. It admits not the same titles, glare, pomp and wealth as the other forms; but although its appearance may be less gaudy, it discovers much power and policy, and *secures the main points*; The Clergy consider the churches (so called) and Parishes here, connected with the state, as Christ's kingdom, his Israel, distinguished by baptism, as old Israel was by circumcision. The body of a gentile people, yea, the nations catholic and protestant, under the name Christian, they consider as the *Christian Church*, and hold it to be the same for substance as the old Jewish church. In this they are exalted and rule with what power and pre-eminence they may; by the power of the State securing their pensions and consequent honours, by its laws. And if they attain less wealth and honour than the Clergy under a form approaching nearer to monarchy or aristocracy, it is not *their fault*: Their love of these, their ravening spirit is the same; their blending of church and State is the same: and possibly they may console themselves, by expecting to be made *more than equal* to the *dignified Clergy of older countries*; in the *worldly millenium* which they are looking and longing for.

and consider as fast approaching. After all this if further proof of Jewish errors darkening the antichristian world should be sought, it might readily be found. A great and increasing number take a strong side with the Jews, openly like them denying the Christ to be the son of God---A respectable and pious party no doubt! allowed to be very decent good Christians !*

A greater number still agree in denying that the Messiah was to make atonement for sin, and to work righteousness for the ungodly. And of the few, *the very few*, who in words own his atonement and righteousness, the majority, when they come to explain their meaning, shew that they really set aside both, and make their unbelief further manifest by holding to a worldly kingdom, and so that the Christ was to come

* It must be striking to a believer of the Scripture to observe it often verified in facts before our eyes. One of its sayings is, "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." The famous Priestley, a prime leader of the modern Jews, who deny that Jesus is the son of God, while thus changing the Christian religion; and dishonouring its divine Author, was full of the *wise* project of smoothing the way of access to professed unbelievers. And what recompense of his craft has he got? why that which in the judgment of God was meet: the contempt it so well merited. They saw that should they admit his doctrine, they would be no more Christians than they are at present, and despised the artifice. One of them (Mr. Volney) has plainly told him nearly as much: "*Your own incredulity, says he, in his divine nature (i.e. of Jesus) is not less subversive of Christianity than the profane opinion which does not find in history the proof required by the English Law to establish a fact.*"

KOLNER'S Answer to Priestley on his Pamphlet, &c. Phil. 1797.

For very different purposes, quite incompatible with these. Thus it appears that the antichristian world having imbibed the very poison of Jewish error, and being intoxicated by copious draughts from the golden cup of abominations, denies the prophetic view of the Messiah.

But the Clergy, with the multitudes following them, not only deny the prophetic view or character of Messiah *who should come*, but the apostolic view or character of Messiah *who has come*, drawn more at large in the New Testament. The Gospel is the testimony of the witnesses concerning Jesus the Christ. It is called the Gospel of the kingdom, Matt. iv. 23 ; the word of the kingdom, Matt. xiii. 9. The character and work of Christ were summed up in the doctrine of this kingdom. Now whoever seeks to change the kingdom must equally change the *word* which alone truly describes and holds it forth : He would also equally change the character or true description of the King, and present to our view another in his stead. *The kingdom of Heaven*, or *Kingdom of God*, is a sacred and most important scriptural view or idea of Christ's Church, as distinguished from every other society. Though set aside now as of little worth, it was the subject of the preaching of John the Baptist, of Jesus, and of Paul.

Men's ears once rung with the important joyful sound, "*The kingdom of Heaven,*"--- "*the kingdom of God.*"----See the historians who relate the life of Jesus, and Acts xx. 25, and xxviii. 23, 31.

By comparing Matt. xvi. 18, with John xviii. 36, 37, it appears that the Church, and the kingdom are the same. In the former text the Church is declared to be built on the truth *that Jesus is the Christ*. In the latter, Christ's kingdom is spoken of as raised and supported by his bearing witness to the *truth*. The society set forth under these two names, is shewn to be one and the same, by its having but one, and the same foundation. Now whoever denies the kingdom to be what it is, denies the foundation to be what it is, that is, he denies that Jesus is the Christ. And thus opposes the very gospel preached by the Apostles.

Paul lays the utmost stress on the dying testimony of Jesus before the Roman Governor, as a thing to be kept *immaculate*, until the then despised confessor, Jesus the King shall openly appear, as *the blessed and only Potentate*.

This confession which Paul calls *a good one* (whatever men may think) was in these memorable words, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" Now to oppose this good confession in word or practice, cannot be less

than opposing the character of Christ, the word or gospel, the truth, the foundation of the kingdom.

All this the Clergy have done, as appears from the things already noticed, and may now be made further manifest. They have taken the words of Jesus, as by the rule of contraries. They have set up *exactly such a kingdom* as he said *his was not*.

If a set of men in an earthly kingdom should undertake to new-model it, to introduce an opposite constitution, change its nature, set aside its laws and introduce new ones, should we not be constrained to say they denied the sovereign, whatever friendship and regard they might pretend? Something very similar has been done as to the kingdom of Jesus Christ by pretended friends.

Let us cast an eye for a moment on the kingdom set up by the Clergy, that we may, if possible, put human authority aside, and discern whether it be heavenly or worldly. One of these opposites it must be.

A State Church, that seeks and enjoys this world in its most alluring things, its riches, pleasures, and honours, just like any infidel nation you could name, is a kingdom of this world.

A Church whose chief officers are supported in affluence and honour, or at least in a very respectable way of living by the

laws of the State, and by their station are gentlemen, and considered as elevated to be company for, and to rank with the most polished and genteel; yea, the very foremost classes and circles in society, must be a kingdom of this world.

A church that prostitutes herself to the worldly ruling powers for such rewards, and has multitudes of children from this impure connection, is surely a kingdom of this world.

As the powers of this world have nothing to do as to Christ's Church, *but merely to let it alone, and leave it to his management*, so it is a striking mark of the false Church, that it departs from the One Husband, and commits fornication with the Kings of the Earth. A Harlot dressed in a profusion of gaudy attire, sitting on a scarlet coloured Beast, is a significant and easy emblem of such a church resting on the State, the very opposite of the Bride of the Lamb, arrayed in pure white: The woman clothed with the sun---his Church clad in the heavenly robe of his spotless righteousness.

When we see a great Nation divided into *Clergy*, with ranks, grades and titles, *all* claiming *reverence*, or a *portion of Divine honour*, and the laity or people comparatively profane, (a distinction analagous to that of rulers and common people) we see such love

of pre-eminence, and provision for pride, as never can, by the wit or logic of man, be reconciled to that constitution of the kingdom of *the Lowly One*, which says, "whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

When the laity hear of *the Order*, and even a *sacred desk*, for one of the Order to exhibit in, and sometimes of a sacred character transmitted down by uninterrupted succession from the Apostles, *pure*, though derived through the maternal Church of Rome, they are ready to gaze in admiration, and think of *the sacred Order* in the family of Aaron of old. And although that order is abolished, and we have in its place an immortal High Priest in an Order that admits not a second or rival; yet men are ready to think the old Order or a like sacred one subsists still in effect, and therefore it is not strange that the Clergy are often called Priests, and considered as public officers, having claims like those called Priests of old, among the Jews, and even among the nations.

In this, and in pretended holy places, we see the love and revival of old abolished shadows. And it would not seem strange that something like a holy distinguishing garb should also be coveted to set off such an Order.

The love of badges of *honour* and the precedence they give is as natural as the love of the *thing itself*. It has wrought in barefaced opposition to the New Testament.

Under its influence the leaders we speak of have conducted as though they had taken for their model the prime opposers of the heavenly kingdom, whose ways are described and censured in these words ; “ Beware of the scribes who desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts.”

These ancient teachers no doubt would have had it believed, that in all this they sought only the glory of God, and the honor and advancement of religion, in having a weight superadded to their *ministerial labours*, and that they had no regard at all to their own personal honor ; it was rather a burden and a tax on their humility ! borne for the people’s good ! and the people gave them credit accordingly. The like has happened since. Modern scribes knew full well the influence of these things on the multitude ; and supposed that they would not see the opposition to Christ’s law. They judged rightly. The multitude awed into respect, *has not seen it*, but given them the rank and precedence which they love.

If we proceed to judge of these matters

not by worldly maxims, but by the light shining from the word of God, the process would bear some resemblance to Ezekiel's digging into the wall; we should see still *greater abominations*! It might be seen (and made evident too, where the authority of that word is admitted) that in setting up this worldly kingdom, the leaders in it have not only discarded Christ's Law against pride and ambition, but as if clothed with a repealing or dispensing power, they have set aside his law against covetousness appearing in laying up treasures on earth, and those which respect brotherly love, and the trying service of brethren dealing with each other, to maintain it; the order of his church, with the whole instituted discipline; the Lord's supper, and baptism: and the trying law of forsaking all and following him, *bearing the cross*. In regard to all these, they have charged the laws and ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant; therefore the curse hath devoured the earth.

By setting up a worldly jewish state of things which Jesus came to remove, they practically and strongly deny that he is the Christ come in the flesh. By pleading with specious arguments, for a worldly Church, and with all their power labouring to support such an one, to the setting aside, with all their address the "good confession,"

they deny that Jesus is the Christ. And so doing have the very mark given by John, by which Antichrist is to be known. See 1st John, ii, 22. To deny the grand doctrine of Jesus amounts to nothing short of denying him to be the Christ. To deny the very kingdom he came to set up, and the laws of that kingdom, is to deny him to be Christ, the king and lawgiver.

Let us now for a moment hear the Apostle John describing the great apostacy to take place under the name of Christ; and giving the marks of the opposite spirits; And bring these pretenders once again to the touch stone. "Every Spirit," says John, "that confesseth that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist." &c. On this it has been observed, that the apostolic creed is summed up in this, that Jesus is the Christ; and who, enquires John, is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? The great Antichrist foretold by the apostles has appeared as we have seen very manifest, yet whatever form he has been seen in, at no time has he refused to put these two words together and say, Jesus is the Christ. His putting them together distinguishes his opposition from that of open in-

—But he denies the *Apostolic* *impo.* those words, and speaks and acts in many ways, *as if the Messiah was not yet come.* So he is a liar, and may be convicted of speaking falshood in what he denies, by part of the truth which he professes to hold: Thus we find antichrist professing to admit the truth of all the facts recorded in the gospel, and to hold the apostolic writings, as divinely inspired, and yet zealously promoting a poor imitation of all the abolished shadows.

It is thus the world called christian has got an earthly Jewish Church, made up of the nations, seeking a kind of outside national righteousness, and an earthly inheritance, and an order at the head, consisting of a society of dignified persons, distinguished by badges of honour; earthly priests, altars, and ministers of an earthly sanctuary; and in short, every token to shew that *Jesus* was not *the Christ* come in the flesh, except it be that men *stupidly put these two words together*; even as the Jews to this day with no less stupidity, maintain the credit of those books, which prove to demonstration that *Jesus* is the *Christ*.

From viewing this subject in various lights, keeping an eye on the word of truth, it appears, that a false *Christ* has been set up and worshipped in the name and stead of the true one. The head of national churches, of an

ungodly world, of a kingdom of ambitious high spirited clergymen, must be a false Christ, having no connection with Jesus of Nazareth, except it be by impiously usurping his name, the more effectually to oppose his cause. And his body must be the world wondering after the beast; the peoples, nations and tongues where the whore sitteth. A connexion that may bring to mind the words of the Poet;

“Fit body to fit head.”

Antichrist has taken the name of Christ, to support his own opposite cause and interest. He comes in a name that opposes the lusts of this world (thus taking a fair veil, as impostors are wont to do,) teaching a religion that in a covered decent way gives large allowance to these lusts---He comes saying I am Christ, and deceives many.

When false Christs are foretold we are not led to think so much of a man rising up, and saying, I am the very seed of the woman, the predicted son of David; as of a false character set up in the name of Jesus Christ, and held by many to be *his character*. Many, says the Lord, shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, &c. This is verified in the many false Christs leading the numerous sects, called christian, collectively making up the man of sin---the great antichrist. Thus the name, Jesus the Christ, has been

torn off from the character drawn for it by the Apostles, and has been placed over the picture of his adversary, drawn to the general taste, by flattering modern limners. If it were not naturally pleasant to us all to shut our eyes, and dream on with the world, might we not see clearly in all this the subtilty of the arch-enemy? It is foretold that by his agency, the most desperate opposition to Christ should be managed in the name of Christ: under the guise of friendship and service. This is one of the last and master-strokes of satan's policy. But the deeper the scheme, the greater and more glorious will Christ's victory be: the greater the honor he will get upon the contriver of the plot: and the more dreadful the confusion and overthrow of the enemy; who will at last appear to have been a *meer tool*, to subserve the cause he opposed!

The cause of the adversary stands on falsehood, and prevails to appearance, where this prevails. To this no force but that of truth is to be opposed by men. To all the flood of lies poured out of the mouth of the dragon, the remnant of the woman's seed will oppose merely the simple testimony of the apostles, as they bore it against like falsehood of old. The weakest of them can answer the lies of antichrist and say, Christ has made reconciliation for iniquity, and

brought in everlasting righteousness. The most holy has been anointed: he will come again in glory to destroy the man of sin, and then the saints will be raised, and take the kingdom. Antichristians believe nothing of all this. They believe not that Christ has risen from the dead. If they did they would believe and love his atonement and righteousness, proved by his resurrection; they would love the kingdom in which he lives, in the resurrection state, and act like the first subjects who believed it. The power of the divine word then turned avowed unbelievers into confessing believers, and nothing short of that can turn pretended believers into real ones now. This power will in due time call all the Lord's people out of Babylon; making them to see her Heaven-reaching sins, and flee out; fearing her dreadful impending plagues. The gospel is not grown old or feeble, it is yet to sound as the *everlasting Gospel*; leading men to fear God, and give to Him that glory which antichrist has robbed away, to bestow on himself. It will cause the faith and patience of the saints to be visible again in many places. Among these it will be held up. They will declare in Zion the work of the Lord their God; the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple. This will bring suffering on

the returning captives, but it will confound the adversaries. The gospel had both these effects at its first publication; it brought sufferings on the apostle, and it confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus. It is able to confound their successors in opposition and error, the clergy and their followers in any of our cities. In the days of Luther it confounded the Pope, then at his meridian altitude, and now that he is fallen, it has power to confound the petty Popes in our towns and villages. They cannot stand before *this word*, even as their prototypes the magicians could not stand before Moses. By this the man of sin is to be consumed, and the wicked one slain.

If it be enquired how does it appear that the modern Jewish builders are, and will be confounded by this word, or doctrine of the Apostles. I will give as brief an answer to the enquiry as may be consistent with clearness, and conclude. That they are confounded appears from this; when at any time, all subjection to human authority is disclaimed, and an earnest appeal made to the Scripture alone, to decide what is truth, they give evident tokens of disgust, and uneasiness, and of a wish to stifle any such appeal, or enquiry. It is some consolation to them, that they see *little* of this kind, but *that little*, gives them no small disquiet. It strikes at

men kingdom. They who ~~unconvinced~~
 compare, may be reminded of the spirit of ~~the~~
 reigning clergy at the dawn of the reforma-
 tion. The cry then was, what will become
 of religion, if innovators prevail, and every
 man is to take his bible, and learn only from
 that, and bring every doctrine and practice
 even of his teachers, to that test? This
 would be razing foundations. As to their
 kingdom, it would be so. Here we may
 ask how can men shew more plainly that the
 light hurts their eyes, than by turning from
 it? If they loved the word they would re-
 joice at and promote such appeal. If that
 word smote them, and even made them
 smart, they would say, it shall be a kind-
 ness; it is a precious oil. It will not break
 the head. Let worldly interest perish, and
 let the truth be glorified, would be their
 language. Instead of any thing like this,
 we see disgust, contempt, and a fear to join
 in appealing to the scripture, (as protestants
 once urged men to do,) lest peradventure
 their cause might not bear it. They trust
 therefore to mens' natural objections against
 the gospel, to do the work to more purpose;
 concluding that few will be so zealous for
 it, as to hurt their worldly interest by op-
 posing the clergy in good earnest, in a sober
 way, as enemies of the cross, and of the
 salvation of men. Arguments which

they cannot answer they affect to despise :
 knowing that opposition which is indirect
 and makes the least noise, to be the safest at
 present, and that they have warm friends yet
 to plead for them. And thus silence and
 contempt are, (to borrow a phrase) the order
 of the day!

But let us for a moment suppose, what
 may soon, (for ought we know,) become
 more than a supposition : let us conceive of
 the gospel with all its convincing power,
 making near approaches to these men. De-
 livering the Lord's flock out of their hands,
 breaking in upon schemes of worldly hap-
 piness, which bind men to each other, lead-
 ing men to forsake all and take up the cross,
 turning opposing Pharisees into zealous
 preachers of Christ crucified ; bringing to
 view the dreadful wrath soon coming on
 the false church. Suppose these things to
 take place, and then say, if more than silent
 contempt would not appear. Should we
 not see alarm and vehement opposition ; and
 these to encrease as the opposers of the truth
 were confounded ? We should doubtless see
the fire to burn, which Christ came to kin-
 dle. For as faith and patience are the
 marks, so they are the weapons of the true
 church ; and worldly policy, and persecution
 of the false.

The leaders in the worldly kingdom ap-

pear at present alarmed, and in a panic for
 it, seeing the progress of infidelity. This
 progress has been greatly accelerated by
 means of their hypocrisy, and in the righte-
 ous judgment of God, the same progress is
 a notable mean to accelerate the ruin of their
 kingdom. But still more do they fear op-
 position from the weak and foolish who
 wield none but apostolical weapons against
 their tottering cause; and well may they
 fear, for there is a promise on record, which
 runs thus, "surely the least of the flock
 shall draw them out." Such opposition must
 and will appear; God has foretold it, yea
 commanded it. "Call together the archers
 against Babylon, all ye that bend the bow
 camp against it round about, let none there-
 of escape, recompense her according to her
 works, according to all she hath done, do
 unto her, for she hath been proud against the
 Lord, the Holy One of Israel." "Put
 yourselves in array against Babylon, round
 about, all ye that bend the bow, shoot at
 at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned
 against the Lord." And when God shall
 deliver his Israel, the scattered sheep, whose
 bones have been broken by the king of Ba-
 bylon, the destroyers of his heritage, who
 held fast the captives and refused to let them
 go, may well be expected to shew their an-

ger. But this will not prevent the captives going free, and their enemies being confounded.

The gentiles have their time of treading under foot the holy city. It is a limited period, and after its expiration they are to be dispossessed. And how are they to be turned out, but by the power of the holy people being restored, and the sanctuary being cleansed? This is predicted as so to take place that the outer court, the profession of Christ's name should be again measurable by the only rule, the word of God. That word will shew that the gentiles bro't in by their Lords the clergy, are mere usurpers and intruders there; that they have no part in Jerusalem, the holy city: but are like the buyers and sellers, who made the Lord's house a den of thieves. This word then overturning their claim, and pouring out their antichristian merchandize piled upon it like the changers' money, will in effect drive them out. The times of Christ will succeed to those of the gentiles. And when the kingdom of the beast falls, that of Christ will rise; and when coming it finds the cast out nations angry. For the times of the seventh trumpet are thus described; the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come," &c. Thus it appears that the sim-

ple gospel, that Jesus is the Christ, confounded its opposers, at the beginning of the gospel day. It has the same power and effect still. And will confound them still more, at the close of that day of God's long suffering, which will soon give place to the day of his wrath. When the dead shall be judged, and his servants small and great, shall be rewarded, and the destroyers of the earth shall be themselves destroyed! —

Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

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